



AGENDA ITEM #: 15

DATE OF MEETING: July 20, 2006

ACTION: X

DISCUSSION: X

PROJECT TITLE: Power of Preschool (PoP) Demonstration Projects

A. SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

This agenda item has two items for discussion and one action item.

DISCUSSION ITEM – PoP Implementation Status

Implementation status of the nine PoP Demonstration Projects will clearly indicate the goals of the First 5 California Families and Children's Commission Strategic Plan are being met. Additional information collected from the nine counties will be shared. Highlights include:

- The nine PoP Demonstration Projects are; Los Angeles, Merced, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Ventura and Yolo.
- Four counties in fiscal year 05/06 served approximately 1700 children.
- By fall of 2006 each of the demonstration sites will be serving approximately 9,500 children combined.
- 85,000 children are projected to be served over the next five years.
- 26% of the teachers working in PoP classrooms were at entry level, 39% at advanced level and 35% percent at quality.
- \$68,055,950 will be allocated to all demonstration projects over five years.

The nine PoP Demonstration Projects meet Goal 1 of the First 5 California Children and Families Commission 2003-2006 Strategic Plan:

Early Learning and Education – increase the quality of and access to the early learning and education for young children and their families,

and Objective 1.5:

Support the development of a statewide system which provides preschool for all.



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DISCUSSION ITEM – PoP Planning Activities

Ongoing planning activities to further develop the PoP Demonstration Projects will be discussed, include the following:

- Continuing the five-year funding commitment to the PoP Demonstration Projects, as originally approved by the State Commission in 2003.
- Discussing the remaining balance from the original \$90 million (\$21,844,00) to fund Power of Preschool Demonstration Projects which might include:
 1. Increasing reimbursement rates for current PoP Demonstration projects.
 2. Increasing the number of counties participating by seeking a third round of Request for Applications.
- Determining the development and content of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the use of \$3 million approved by the Commission for Technical Assistance (TA).
 1. The following guiding principles will be used in developing the TA plan:
 - a) Collaborate and coordinate with partners, especially County Commissions and the First 5 Association,
 - b) Be relevant and meaningful,
 - c) Build on previous and existing efforts,
 - d) Be cost effective, and
 - e) Be made available to all counties interested in expanding universal preschool efforts, not just PoP counties.
 2. The process for developing the TA plan includes:
 - a) Establishment of a workgroup consisting of representatives from the PoP Projects, First 5 Association, First 5 California Staff and counties interested in providing universal preschool efforts; and
 - b) Development of a workgroup to prepare a TA plan to present at the October Commission meeting.

ACTION ITEM – Modification to PoP Quality Criteria

This is a recommendation to amend one of the fourteen Quality Criterion which is to achieve a “5” on the Environmental Rating Scales within 6 to 12 months (PoP RFA dated November 2005). The new recommendation is to achieve an average of “4” on all indicators at entry level, reaching a “5” within 24 months, and an average of “3” on each subscale.



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B. BACKGROUND/HISTORY:

At the July 2003 Commission meeting, \$100 million was allocated over 5-7 years to First 5 PoP Demonstration Projects. The purpose of the PoP Demonstration Projects is to:

- Demonstrate the impact of voluntary preschool for all 4-year-olds (or 3- and 4-year-olds) in a limited number of counties, cities, and school districts; representing California's language, cultural, and geographic diversity (education reform);
- Provide a learning "lab" for coordinated strategies building on the existing early care and education systems, cost and financing models, and partners to implement high quality preschool programs in diverse settings (models for systems change);
- Reduce disparities in outcomes by effectively addressing the language and cultural diversity of California's children and their families and providing programs inclusive of children with disabilities and other special needs (consistent with the First 5 California Equity Principles); and
- Inspire public will to expand preschool for all California children and fully implement the California Master Plan for Education Preschool for All recommendation.

To ensure these projects achieve a standard of high quality, the State Commission at its January 2005 meeting adopted 14 Program "quality criteria." Quality criterion #2 (see Attachment 1) relates to accessibility and quality of facilities and establishes the standard for the classroom's learning environment using acceptable environmental rating scales. These scales determine the level of quality of the classroom environment by measuring (giving a rating score) the teacher's competency in creating a quality learning environment for children in either a center-based or family child care home setting. The current specific requirements are:

- "Programs will use accepted external review instruments, Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) or Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS), with an acceptable score of "5" or better" (page 42 of the PoP Demonstration Project RFA dated November 2005), and
- "Providers need to have an Environmental Rating Score of "5" or better within the time period (e.g., 6 or 12 months) for which First 5 California funding is requested" (page 33 of the PoP Demonstration Project RFA dated November 2005).



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Attachment 2 provides the ECERS list of the 43 indicators and the seven sub-scales, and Attachment 3 provides the FDCRS list of the 40 indicators and the seven sub-scales.

At the first PoP Network meeting in February 2006, the vast majority of PoP Demonstration Project representatives explained the difficulty of having providers achieve of a score of "5" within the first 6-12 months. The problem identified was the short time limit stipulation, not the achievement of a rating score of "5." The project representatives indicated this entry point requirement significantly limited their ability to recruit and enroll providers.

In response, First 5 California staff established a workgroup consisting of PoP Project representatives. The workgroup quickly reached consensus to maintain the "quality" intent of the PoP quality criterion while finding a solution to the time limit. They studied the issue, explored alternatives, and consulted with experts in the early care and education profession. Ultimately, the workgroup presented the following recommended proposal at the June 2006 PoP Network meeting. Consensus to accept this recommendation was reached.

C. PROPOSAL: Approve Alternative to the Current Environmental Rating Scales Criteria.

- The point of entry-level score on the Environmental Rating Scale for providers will be "4", which is obtained by averaging all 43 indicators of the ECERS or averaging all 40 indicators of the FDCRS.
- Counties may choose to require a higher entry-level score.
- Within a period of 24 months, providers must receive an overall score of "5," which is obtained by averaging all 43 indicators of the ECERS or averaging all 40 indicators of the FDCRS.
- At entry-level and throughout their participation, providers must receive, at a minimum, an average of "3" on each of the seven sub-scales for the applicable environmental rating scale.

Rationale for This Alternative

This proposed alternative is based on information provided by San Mateo, San Francisco and Los Angeles Counties. These counties have implemented PoP



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programs and currently have ECERS and FDCRS data on providers. All PoP Demonstration Projects felt these recommendations would not affect the quality of the environment. The expectation of entry-level providers to obtain a "5" without training and support cannot be met within a very limited time period. The PoP counties agreed that eventually having providers obtain an average of "5" overall on the indicators was achievable given enough time.

Time Frame

Once approved by the State Commission, the amended quality criterion # 2 will be implemented immediately and remain in effect throughout the duration of demonstration projects.

Evaluation

The PoP Demonstration Projects are required to participate in the State Evaluation Framework and specifically address the ten evaluation questions outlined in the PoP RFA. First 5 California staff and county staff are currently engaged in clarifying and refining the data elements needed to address these questions.

FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA OBJECTIVES:

The PoP Demonstration Projects are an important strategy towards achieving "school readiness" and implementing the First 5 Principles on Equity. The PoP Demonstration Projects will continue to build on and connect with new and existing projects and research.

D. INTERFACE/IMPACT ON OTHER PROGRAMS:

The PoP Demonstration Projects, along with the Special Needs Project, build on the platform developed by the School Readiness Programs. The PoP Demonstration Projects supports in-depth learning while building on local capacity resources and expertise. First 5 California staff and representatives from the nine PoP Demonstration Projects participate in a state and federal collaborative facilitated by the California Department of Education's Child Development Division.

E. ATTACHMENTS

1. Quality Criterion #2
2. Summary of the Environmental Rating Scale for Center Based Programs
3. Summary of the Environmental Rating Scale for Family Child Care Homes



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Attachment 1

**First 5 Preschool Demonstration Project Quality Criteria # 2
(Excerpt from PoP RFA)**

“Coordinate Accessible and High Quality Facilities through expansion and upgrades so all 4-year-olds in the designated district(s), city, or county have access to preschool.”

“Preschools will be provided in appropriate facilities that are clean, safe, accessible, inclusive, licensed, meet regulatory quality standards, and are well-equipped with sufficient, appropriate materials and toys. The facilities are licensed (Title 22) and meet regulatory quality standards for the State Preschool Program (Title 5). Programs will use accepted external review instruments such as, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale- ECERS or Family Day Care Rating Scale – FDCRS (acceptable scores of ‘5’ or better). Facilities and playgrounds shall meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the California Building Standards Code, and address best practices for accessible facilities.”

“Assess, analyze, and develop plans that maximize unused capacity within current public and private preschool programs/facilities district or citywide or countywide; and coordinate planning for the development, upgrading, and expansion of preschool facilities, using bond measures, the ABCD/Packard Partnership, LEA and Head Start and other ECE funding for facilities, local funds, and other opportunities.”



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Attachment 2

Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-R Profile – Used for Child Development Centers

SUBSCALES	INDICATORS
<i>I. Space and Furnishings</i>	1. Indoor space 2. Furniture for routine care, play, and learning 3. Furniture for relaxation 4. Room arrangement for play 5. Space for privacy 6. Child related display 7. Space for gross motor 8. Gross motor equipment
<i>II. Personal Care Routines</i>	9. Greeting/departing 10. Meals/Snacks 11. Nap/rest 12. Toileting/diapering 13. Health practices 14. Safety practices
<i>III. Language-Reasoning</i>	15. Books and pictures 16. Encouraging children to communicate 17. Using language to develop reasoning 18. Informal use of language
<i>IV. Activities</i>	19. Fine motor 20. Art 21. Music/movement 22. Blocks 23. Sand/water 24. Dramatic play 25. Nature/Science 26. Math/number 27. Use of TV, video and/or computers 28. Promoting acceptance of diversity
<i>V. Interaction</i>	29. Supervision of gross motor activities 30. General supervision of children 31. Discipline 32. Staff-child interactions 33. Interactions among children
<i>VI. Program Structure</i>	34. Schedule 35. Free play 36. Group time 37. Provisions for children with disabilities
<i>VII. Parents and Staff</i>	38. Provisions for parents 39. Provisions for personal needs of staff 40. Provisions for professional needs of staff 41. Staff interaction and cooperation 42. Supervision and evaluation of staff 43. Opportunities for professional growth



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Attachment 3

FDCRS Profile – Used for Family Child Care Homes

SUBSCALES	INDICATORS
<i>I. Space and Furnishings for Care and Learning</i>	1. Furnishings for routine care and learning 2. Furnishings for relaxation and comfort 3. Child-related display 4. Indoor space arrangement 5. Active physical play 6. Space to be alone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. infants/toddlers b. 2 years and older
<i>II. Basic Care</i>	7. Arriving/Leaving 8. Meals/Snacks 9. Nap/rest 10. Toileting/diapering 11. Personal grooming 12. Health 13. Safety
<i>III. Language-Reasoning</i>	14. Informal use of language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. infants/toddlers b. 2 years and older 15. Helping children understand language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. infants/toddlers b. 2 years and older 16. Helping children use language 17. Helping children reason
<i>IV. Learning Activities</i>	18. Eye-hand coordination 19. Art 20. Music and movement 21. Sand and water play 22. Dramatic play 23. Blocks 24. Use of TV 25. Schedule of daily activities 26. Supervision of play indoors and outdoors
<i>V. Social Development</i>	27. Tone 28. Discipline 29. Cultural awareness
<i>VI. Adult Needs</i>	30. Relationships with parents 31. Balancing personal and care giving responsibilities 32. Opportunities for professional growth



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<i>VII. Supplementary Items: Provisions for Exceptional Children</i>	33. Adaptations for basic care (physically handicapped) 34. Adaptations for activities (physically handicapped) 35. Adaptations for other special needs 36. Communication (exceptional) 37. Language/reasoning (exceptional) 38. Learning and play activities (exceptional) 39. Social development (exceptional) 40. Caregiver preparation
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